

**Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks
Wildlife Division**

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

LOST RIVER WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA FEE TITLE ACQUISITION



August 18, 2016



PART 1. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

A. Proposed State Action

Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks (MFWP) propose the fee title acquisition of a 640-acre parcel of land adjacent to the Lost River Wildlife Management Area (Lost River WMA). The property is located along the Milk River and consists of intact native riparian habitats and associated badlands and upland habitats. These native habitats consist primarily of Great Plains floodplain vegetation communities which contain a mix of shrub species including silver sagebrush, buffaloberry, chokecherry, Russian olive, and a diverse mix of graminoid and forb species.

The parcel proposed for acquisition would be added to and managed as a part of the Lost River WMA.

B. Agency Authority for the proposed action

MFWP has the authority under State law §87-1-201, Montana Code Annotated (MCA) to protect, enhance, and regulate the use of Montana's fish and wildlife resources for public benefit now and in the future. In addition, §87-1-209 MCA grants MFWP the authority to purchase land or water suitable for game, bird, fish, or fur-bearing animal restoration, propagation, or protection, for state parks, and for outdoor recreation.

MFWP also has the authority under state law §87-1-709 MCA to acquire by purchase such lands or other property or interests therein as may be necessary for the purpose of carrying on any wildlife restoration project created and established under the provisions of said Pittman-Robertson Act.

In 1987, the Montana Legislature passed House Bill 526, which earmarked hunting license revenues to secure wildlife habitat through lease, conservation easement, or fee title acquisition (§87-1-241 and §87-1-242, MCA). This is commonly referred to as the Habitat Montana program. As with other MFWP property acquisition proposals, the Fish and Wildlife Commission and the State Land Board (for properties greater than 100 acres or \$100,000) must approve any land acquisition proposal by the agency. This Environmental Assessment (EA) is part of that decision making process. In 2015, Montana House Bill 403 limited FWP spending authority for Habitat Montana funding for acquisitions. This bill did provide an exception for "cases where the department is currently negotiating such purchase". The Fish and Wildlife Commission gave its endorsement to explore acquisitions or easements in this area during the January 2014 meeting.

C. Anticipated Schedule

Fish and Wildlife Commission Endorsement: January 2014
Public Scoping Period: June 2015
Draft Environmental Assessment: August 2016
Decision Notice: September 2016
Fish and Wildlife Commission Review: October 2016
Montana Board of Land Commissioners: November 2016

D. Location affected by proposed action

This property is located approximately 45 miles northwest of Havre in Hill County near the US-Canadian border. The property is adjacent to the Lost River WMA along the Milk River. The property is located within MFWP administrative Region 6 and all of the property is within Hunting District 600. The proposed acquisition consists of 640 acres adjacent to the Lost River Wildlife Management Area. Maps of the property are included in Appendix I of this document.

Legal Description

Township 37 North, Range 10 East, P.M.M., Hill County, Montana

Section 4: SW¹/₄NW¹/₄; N¹/₂SW¹/₄, SE¹/₄SW¹/₄, SW¹/₄SE¹/₄;
Section 5: S¹/₂N¹/₂; N¹/₂S¹/₂; SW¹/₄SW¹/₄;
Section 9: NE¹/₄NW¹/₄, NW¹/₄NE¹/₄.

E. Project size

The acreage of property proposed for acquisition is approximately 640 acres. This includes roughly 250 acres of wetland/riparian/floodplain habitat, 270 acres of rangeland, and 100 acres of badlands. The Lost River WMA, to which the property would be added, currently consists of roughly 3000 acres.

F. Permits, Funding and Overlapping Jurisdiction

Permits: None Required

Funding

USFWS Pittman-Robertson	\$525,000 (75%)
Habitat Montana Fund	\$175,000 (25%)
Total	\$700,000

Other Overlapping Jurisdictional Responsibilities

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Responsibility</u>
Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission	Purchase Approval
Montana State Land Board	Purchase Approval
Hill County Weed District	Weed Plan
State Historic Preservation Office	Cultural/Historic Inventory

G. Narrative Summary of the Proposed Action

The primary purpose of this action is to conserve and enhance native riparian and grassland communities that provide habitat for a variety of game and non-game species. This parcel is located adjacent to the Lost River WMA and the addition of the 640-acre parcel of property augments the existing wildlife and habitat resource values of this area. The parcel is located within a 9,000+ acre block of public land and adds to a large corridor of native habitats along the Milk River from Canada to Fresno Reservoir. Conservation of the wildlife values of this parcel would help maintain the viability of this corridor for maintaining connectivity and genetic diversity of wildlife populations.

Conserving these native habitats and instituting wildlife-friendly management practices would help preserve and enhance mule deer, pronghorn antelope, white-tailed deer, elk, ring-necked pheasants, sharp-tailed grouse, Hungarian partridge, and waterfowl populations in addition to conserving habitat for many other species of grassland and riparian songbirds, small mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and fish. The property provides habitat for several Tier-I species of greatest conservation (State Wildlife Action Plan 2015), species of concern, and potential species of concern.

A second purpose for this project is to provide access to this property and adjacent public land for hunting, fishing, and other recreational activities. Milk River riparian habitats are valued for their abundant wildlife and recreational opportunities in addition to their potential productivity for ranching and agricultural operations. The majority of land along the Milk River in Montana is in private ownership. Recreational opportunities and access for hunters along the Milk River in North-central Montana have decreased in recent years. This parcel is located adjacent to the Lost River WMA in a large block of public land. Addition of this parcel would improve access to the western end of the WMA and decrease potential for incidents of trespassing. Inclusion of the parcel in the WMA would simplify management of the area and ensure future MFWP access to the entire WMA.

Thus, the need for this project is two-fold. The first need is to protect valuable wildlife habitats from the threat of development, while the second need is to secure perpetual public access to and through this land for hunters, fishermen, recreationists, and MFWP employees.

H. Description of Alternatives

Alternative A: No Action

Under the no action alternative, MFWP does not purchase this land. The property could remain in its current ownership or may be sold to another landowner. The location of this property, adjacent to large amounts of public land and a wildlife management area, would increase the potential for sale of this property for its hunting and recreational value. Due to the scenic nature and river access provided by the property, it is also possible it could be divided into smaller parcels or ranchettes for sale to multiple buyers; however the limited road access would diminish the potential for this option. There would be increased potential for development (subdivision, agricultural conversion, energy development) under this option.

Alternative B Proposed Action

The proposed action is for MFWP to purchase the 640 acre parcel as an addition to the Lost River WMA. The property would be managed to conserve and enhance the existing native vegetation communities and wildlife populations. MFWP would acquire the mineral rights, archaeological, and paleontological rights held by the landowner. The majority of the acreage proposed for purchase by MFWP is native rangeland and there would be no need for any intensive habitat restoration. Currently, there is no grazing on the Lost River WMA, while a management plan is being developed. If grazing is determined to be compatible with the wildlife values and goals of the Lost River WMA, a rest-rotation grazing system would be implemented. Additional costs to modify the fencing or water sources could be needed, and would primarily be funded through MFWP's Habitat Montana and Upland Game Bird Enhancement Programs. There may also be potential to secure funding from federal habitat improvement programs or from nongovernmental conservation organizations. This alternative would provide perpetual access to the Milk River and surrounding property for public hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing, hiking, and other recreational activities.

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CHECKLIST

A. Physical Environment

1. Land Resources

The vast majority of this property (>95%) is unbroken native range. The productive soils in this region have historically resulted in high rates of conversion of native range for agricultural production. Very few properties in this region have such a high proportion of intact native vegetation. The wetland/riparian and mixed-grass prairie habitats present are both Tier-I habitats of high wildlife and conservation value based on the Montana State Wildlife Action Plan. The Milk River drainage bisects the property. The riparian habitat along the Milk River consists largely of silver sagebrush grasslands with other native shrub species, forbs, and grasses.

The riparian floodplain areas transition through more rugged badlands and cliff habitats into mixed-grass prairie habitat in the uplands. These grassland habitats are a mixture of cool and warm season grasses and generally appear to be in fair to good condition. The grasslands are dominated by western wheatgrass, green needlegrass, Sandberg bluegrass, needle and thread grass, with a variety of other grass, forbs, and shrub species.

There are a few areas where some non-native grasses including crested wheatgrass and cheatgrass are present, but the distribution and abundance of these invasive grasses is relatively limited.

Table 1. Land cover of Lost River WMA Addition based on GIS Land cover classification.

Great Plains Mixed grass Prairie	261
Greasewood Flat	99
Great Plains Badlands	94
Great Plains Floodplain	68
Open Water	66
Introduced Upland Vegetation - Annual and Biennial Forbland	20
Great Plains Sand Prairie	13
Great Plains Cliff and Outcrop	13
Great Plains Shrubland	5
Great Plains Wooded Draw and Ravine	1

The Natural Resources and Conservation Service's Soil Survey database identifies the project area as the following under farmland classifications:

	# of acres	% of total
Not prime farmland	283	48.7%
Farmland of statewide importance	204	35.2%
Prime farmland if irrigated	94	16.1%

No Action: Under this alternative the land may be sold to another buyer and there would be the potential for increased development of the property. If portions of the property are converted to agricultural production, this would result in increased vegetation disturbance and erosion. If the land was sold and placed into agricultural production or subdivided there would be a need for additional road development. There would also likely be construction of additional residences and outbuildings on the property which could have a negative impact on land resources. If the property remained under current ownership, management of the property would likely not change in the short-term. The current road into the property may require maintenance to maintain access.

Proposed Action: Under the proposed action land resources within the property would be protected and managed for fish and wildlife habitat values and recreational use. There are no plans for the creation of additional roads on the property although some road work may be needed to keep the primary road safe and passable. Road work could cause minimal soil and vegetation disturbance. Purchase of this property would result in increased public use of this property and minor increases to use of adjacent public lands. This use would be limited to walk-in or horseback use and would not result in increased road use. The purchase of the property would prevent potential native range conversion or other soil disturbing activities and would promote protection of soils and geologic features. Any grazing that could occur would be managed through a rest-rotation grazing system which would reduce soil erosion and compaction. There may be some additional fencing required if a new grazing system is implemented. There would be no expected increase in erosion or negative impact to soil quality.

2. Air and Water

The primary water source on the property would be the Milk River. The Milk River is approximately 729 miles in length. It originates in Montana on the Eastern Front and flows east through Alberta and back into Montana. Water from the St. Mary Diversion adds significantly to the Milk River's volume during the summer months. Water testing conducted by the Milk River Watershed Council Canada upstream of the property classified the water quality in the stretch of the river as "good" (MRWCC 2008). There has been little water testing of the Milk River from the Canadian Border to Fresno Reservoir (2 samples) from 2004-2012. These limited samples indicated higher levels of phosphorus, copper, and iron (MRWCC 2013). There is no FEMA flood plain map for this area and the floodplain for this area has not yet been delineated. There are no water rights recorded for this property.

No Action: If the property was sold or management practices were changed there would be the potential for increased conversion of native rangeland to agricultural production. Conversion of native prairie to agricultural production could result in increased release of dust and particulate matter into the air. Sale of the ranch could result in increased road development and dust production. This option would also allow for potential oil and gas development on the property. Oil and gas development can result in the release of volatile organic compounds and methane which could impact local air quality. This area is currently considered to have low potential for oil and gas development, so the impact of oil and gas development on air resources is unlikely at this time.

It is likely that there would be no immediate impacts to the water resources on this land. Potential increased agricultural conversion could lead to increases in sediment and nutrient loads in the Milk River and its tributaries.

Proposed Action: The county road that would provide the primary means of accessing the property is a gravel road. Increased public visitation to the area could result in increased production of dust. Due to the small size of this parcel in relation to the amount of existing public land, the expected increase in road traffic due to this acquisition would be slight. Therefore the impact of dust to air quality would likely be negligible. Any impact could be mitigated if necessary by working with the county to apply dust-reducing agents to the road to minimize airborne dust.

Under the proposed action, water resources on this parcel would be maintained or enhanced. Riparian areas would be protected and potentially improved by the action. There are no proposed changes that would result in increased discharge, changes in drainage patterns, alteration of river or streams courses, or changes in the quality or quantity of groundwater. Modifications to grazing practices on the property would have the potential to improve riparian vegetation and water quality. Changes in the livestock grazing system may require the improvement or development of additional livestock water sources.

3. Vegetation

The majority of the property is unbroken native habitat including riparian floodplain and upland mixed grass prairie. Initial assessment of the property has not revealed significant noxious weed issues on the property. There have been locations on the property where invasive plant species including crested wheatgrass, cheatgrass, and thistle species have been observed, however the distribution of these species is limited.

No Action: If the property is sold and/or management practices on the property change it is possible that a portion of the land could be developed for agricultural production, energy development, or subdivision. All of these outcomes would result in a loss of native rangeland and a negative impact to vegetative resources.

Proposed Action: Under the proposed action the native vegetation on the property would be protected and may be enhanced. The native vegetation communities currently found on the property would be protected from agricultural conversion. A weed management plan would be developed in accordance with MFWP's Integrated Noxious Weed Management Plan and the Montana County Weed Control Act (7-22-2154, MCA). The weed management plan would be developed through consultation with the Hill County Weed District. MFWP would also have the ability to evaluate the effects of current livestock grazing on the property and modify these practices to improve vegetative diversity and condition. If grazing is implemented as a vegetation management tool, a rest-rotation grazing system that would include periods of rest and deferment would be implemented to increase heterogeneity in vegetation heights and promote improved range condition.

4. Fish/Wildlife Resources

The variety of productive riparian and grassland areas provide habitat for a diverse number of game and nongame species of wildlife. There are mule deer, white-tailed deer, elk, antelope, pheasant, sharp-tailed grouse, Hungarian partridge, mourning doves, and a variety of waterfowl species all present in huntable numbers on the property. The property is classified as crucial winter range for both mule deer and antelope. The riparian areas provide habitat for a variety of shorebirds, songbirds, amphibians, reptiles, bats, and other nongame species. The badlands and rocky cliff habitats provide cover for elk, deer, bobcats, and other game species. These breaks-type habitats also provide specialized roosting habitat for bats and nest sites for raptors. The upland grassland sites provide forage for big games species, nesting cover for upland birds and grassland songbirds, and habitat for a variety of reptiles and amphibians. There are no Fish and Wildlife Service threatened or endangered species or critical habitat known to be present on the property. A list of species of concern and potential species of concern that are either known to occur or predicted to occur on or near the property is provided in Table 2.

Table 2. Species of Concern and Potential Species of Concern occurring on or near the Lost River WMA

Common Name	Scientific Name
Hoary Bat	<i>Lasiurus cinereus</i>
Little Brown Myotis	<i>Myotis lucifugus</i>
Merriam's Shrew	<i>Sorex merriami</i>
Swift Fox	<i>Vulpes velox</i>
Baird's Sparrow	<i>Ammodramus bairdii</i>
Black Tern	<i>Chlidonias niger</i>
Brewer's Sparrow	<i>Spizella breweri</i>
Burrowing Owl	<i>Athene cunicularia</i>
Chestnut-collared Longspur	<i>Calcarius ornatus</i>
Ferruginous Hawk	<i>Buteo regalis</i>
Golden Eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>
Great Blue Heron	<i>Ardea herodias</i>

Loggerhead shrike	<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>
Long-billed curlew	<i>Numenius americanus</i>
McCown's Longspur	<i>Rhynchophanes mccownii</i>
Sprague's Pipit	<i>Anthus sparguei</i>
Greater Short-horned Lizard	<i>Phrynosoma hernandesi</i>
Western Hognose snake	<i>Heterodon nasicus</i>
Great Plains Toad	<i>Anaxyrus cognatus</i>
Plains Spadefoot Toad	<i>Spea bombifrons</i>

No Action: Under this alternative the land could be sold and agricultural or subdivision development could occur. Depending on the extent of development, the loss of native habitats could result in a decline of some game and nongame wildlife species. Development would also further fragment the existing habitat and may restrict connectivity with wildlife populations north of the border

Proposed Action: This action would benefit a variety of wildlife species by conserving, enhancing and protecting wildlife habitats on this parcel. The predominantly native habitats on the property would be preserved. The connectivity between the property and native habitats and wildlife populations to the north would be maintained. Protection of riparian habitats will also benefit water quality and fish populations found in the Milk River. Hunting, fishing, and other recreational opportunities, which have historically been allowed on the property, would continue to be provided. The inclusion of this property as a WMA would increase the overall recreational use of the property. The protection of Tier-I riparian and grassland habitats would decrease potential fragmentation and benefit many species of concern.

Hunting, trapping, and other recreational activities would be allowed on the property. There would be no winter closure of the WMA, unless further evaluation determined a future need to minimize disturbance to wildlife.

B. Human Environment

1. Noise and Electrical effects

No Action: Noise and electrical impacts to the property are difficult to predict if another party purchases the property. If oil and gas or other mineral rights on the property were developed, there could be an increase in noise levels in the area. If the property were subdivided there would be a need for additional electrical development for any residences that would be built. The overall electrical and noise impacts would be minor.

Proposed Action: Under the proposed action there would be no significant negative impact to noise levels in the area. There would be increased use of the area by recreationists, but most of this use would be walk-in based recreation and would not impact noise levels. There would be no foreseeable development requiring increased

electrical capacity. This action would not create adverse electrostatic or electromagnetic effects. There would be no interference with radio or television reception.

2. Land Use

Currently this property is primarily a privately owned property this is managed for livestock production. The property is currently fenced in a pasture with adjacent School Trust Land and is rated for 894 AUMs and historically has provided pasture for 100-120 head of cattle.

No Action: If the property remains in current ownership, there would be no change in land use. Changes in future landownership could result in potential changes in land use including agricultural conversion or subdivision. There would be reduced opportunity for public recreation.

Proposed Action: The proposed action for the area would be for the property to be managed primarily for fish and wildlife habitat in perpetuity. Livestock use and impact on the vegetation would be evaluated. If grazing is permitted, it would be in a rest rotation grazing system and AUMs may be reduced. The property would be open for public use. Acquisition of this property would also reduce the potential for incidences of trespassing or hunting without permission.

3. Risk/Health Hazards

No Action: It is unknown if any new risks or health hazards may occur if the property is purchased by another party.

Proposed Action: No significant impact would occur under the proposed action. MFWP has conducted a hazardous materials survey and no hazardous materials were identified. MFWP Game Wardens would enforce state hunting laws on the new WMA. The main existing road on the property would not be open for vehicular use without improvements.

4. Community Impacts

No Action: With this alternative, the land could be sold and could see increased agricultural or energy development or potential subdivision. Development could result in minor increases in traffic, but would likely have little impact on overall population growth and development in Hill County. Grazing would continue under the current system. There would be a loss of public recreational opportunities.

Proposed Action: The proposed action would eliminate potential agricultural development, subdivision, or future oil and gas development on the property. Changes in livestock grazing could reduce the grazing opportunities provided by the property. The increased recreational opportunity providing by adding this property to the WMA would draw more sportsmen and visitors to the area. Increased public access to recreation may provide additional outdoor recreation-based revenues to the local community. The

acquisition of this property would prevent the opportunity for surrounding landowners to purchase this property.

5. Public Services/Taxes/Utilities

No Action: Impacts to public services, taxes, and utilities would be dependent on the type of future development on the property. Subdivision of the property would require additional public services and utilities. Subdivision or energy development on the property could result in generation of additional tax revenue.

Proposed Action: There would be no changes or need for increased public services in the property area. There would be no impact to current Hill County property tax revenue since under Section 87-1-603, MCA, FWP is required to pay “to the county a sum equal to the amount of taxes which would be payable on county assessment of the property were it taxable to a private citizen.” FWP would continue maintenance, weed control, and fish and wildlife law enforcement on the property. FWP currently monitors and patrols the existing Lost River WMA and would patrol the proposed addition.

6. Aesthetics/Recreation

No Action: It possible the public recreational opportunities could be significantly reduced if the property were sold to another party. Should energy or agricultural development occur, it would reduce the aesthetic and recreational quality of the area. Subdivision of the property would result in construction of more buildings which could impact the scenic value and viewshed of the area

Proposed Action: The creation of a WMA on this land would result in a positive impact to both aesthetics and recreation in this portion of the Milk River. High quality public hunting and fishing opportunities would be created and maintained in perpetuity. The natural beauty of the Milk River frontage would also be enhanced and preserved. There are no plans for construction of any buildings or structures that would interfere with the scenic views of the property. The property would be open year-round for public recreation. There would be fewer signs needed along the boundary of the property.

7. Cultural/Historic Resources

A cultural resources report for the property was conducted by the Historical Preservation Office (SHPO) to determine if any known cultural resources exist on this site and none were identified. Although no formal inventory of the property has been done of the property, incidental field observations indicate evidence of past Native American use of the property.

No Action: The impact to the cultural and historical resources on the property, if sold to another party, would be difficult to quantify due to the limited knowledge of cultural and

historic resources present. Agricultural conversion of native rangeland would likely have a negative impact on these resources. Subdivision of the property would lead to increased disturbance for the construction of buildings and roads and would have a potential minor negative impact on these resources.

Proposed Action:

The protection of native habitats from agricultural development or subdivision will help protect cultural, historical, and paleontological resources on the property from disturbance. There are no ground disturbing activities planned under this alternative that would have an impact on cultural or historic resources. Any ground disturbing activities conducted by MFWP would require consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office to determine potential impacts to cultural or historic resources.

8. Significance Criteria

No Action: Sale of the property to another party and potential development of this property for either agricultural production or subdivision could have a negative long-term impact to wildlife and fisheries species in the region. The loss of native habitats on the property may also impact migration corridors and connectivity between wildlife populations in the U.S and Canada. The level of this risk is unknown because the future impacts to resources and public access would be dependent on the actions of a future property owner(s).

Proposed Action: Under the proposed action the purchase of the property would result in the addition of the property to the Lost River Wildlife Management Area. The native range on the property would be protected and connectivity along the Milk River corridor would be maintained in perpetuity. Wildlife and fisheries populations in the area would benefit from the protection of these habitats. Increased public recreational opportunities on the property and surrounding public land would be protected enhanced. There are currently no plans for the construction of any buildings or other structures on the property. There would be no foreseeable negative cumulative impacts of this action.

PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION

This proposed acquisition would conserve native habitats and benefit area wildlife and fisheries populations. It would enhance public and administrative access to neighboring MFWP property and other public lands and increase recreational opportunities in perpetuity.

PART IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A. Public Involvement.

Public notification of this EA and opportunity to comment will be provided through the following means.

- A statewide press release
- Public notices in each of the following papers: Great Falls Tribune and Havre Daily News
- Direct mailing to adjacent landowners and interested parties
- Public notice and posting of the EA on the FWP web page, <http://fwp.mt.gov/news/publicNotices>
- There will be an informational meeting and public hearing on this proposal in Havre from 6:30-7:30 pm at the Hill County Electric Hospitality Room on September 8th.

Copies of the EA will be available for public review at the MFWP Region 6 Headquarters in Glasgow and area office in Havre.

B. Duration of Comment Period.

The public comment period will extend for 30 days starting August 18th. Written comments will be accepted until 5:00 pm on September 16th and can be mailed to the address below

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks
ATTN: Lost River WMA Addition Acquisition
1 Airport Road
Glasgow, MT 59230

Or comments can be emailed to

shemmer@mt.gov

C. Offices/Programs contacted or contributing to this document

Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks
Lands Unit, Helena
Legal Unit, Helena
Wildlife and Fisheries Division, Helena
Montana Natural Heritage Program, Helena
Montana State Historic Preservation Office

Part V. EA PREPARATION

Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required? If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action.

An EIS is not required. Based on the evaluation of the impacts to the physical and human environment and potential cumulative impacts; no significant impacts of this proposed land acquisition were identified. Therefore, an EA is the appropriate level of review and an EIS is not required.

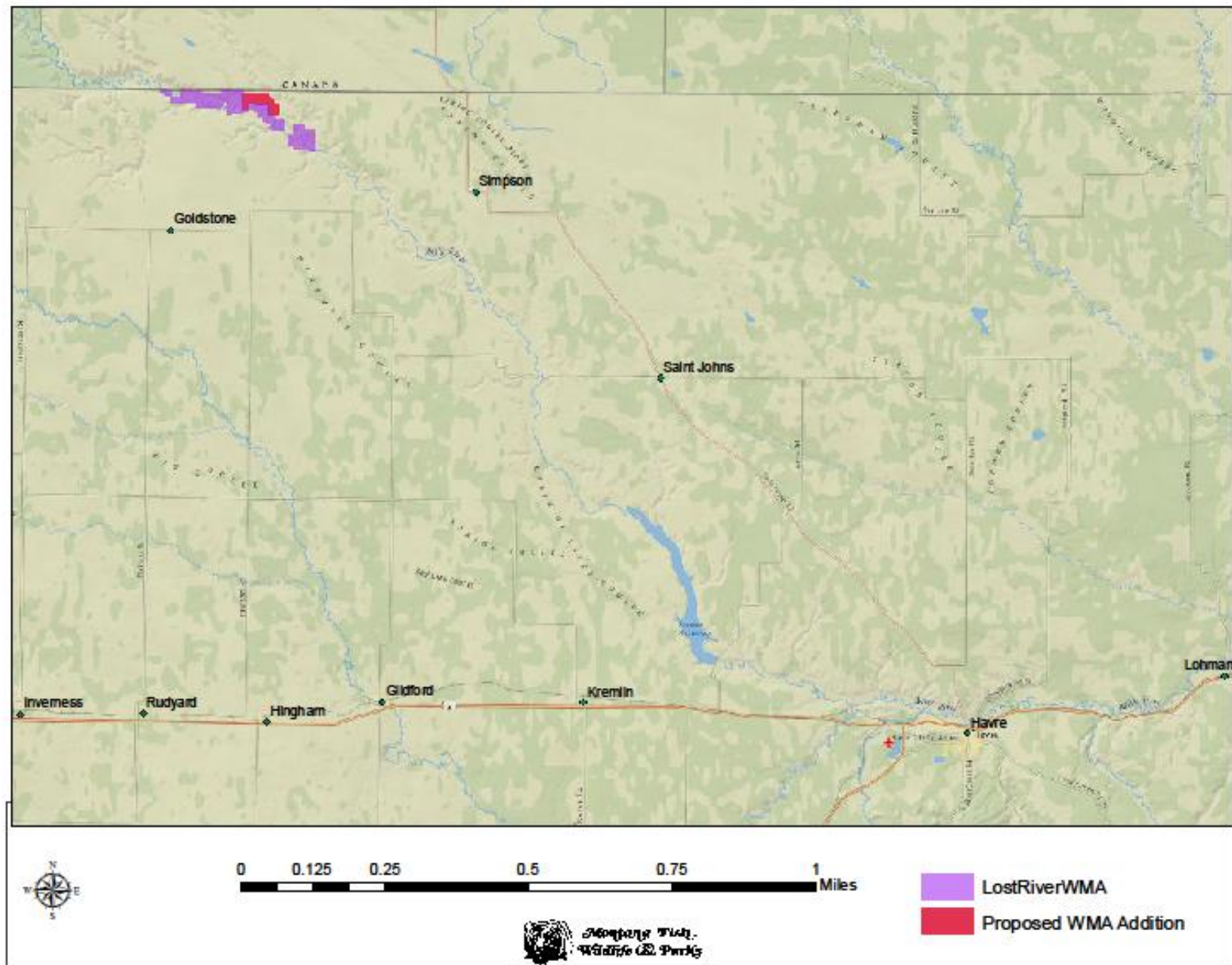
1. Person Responsible for Preparing the EA

Scott Hemmer
Havre Wildlife Biologist
Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks
2165 Hwy 2 East
Havre, MT 59501
406-265-6177

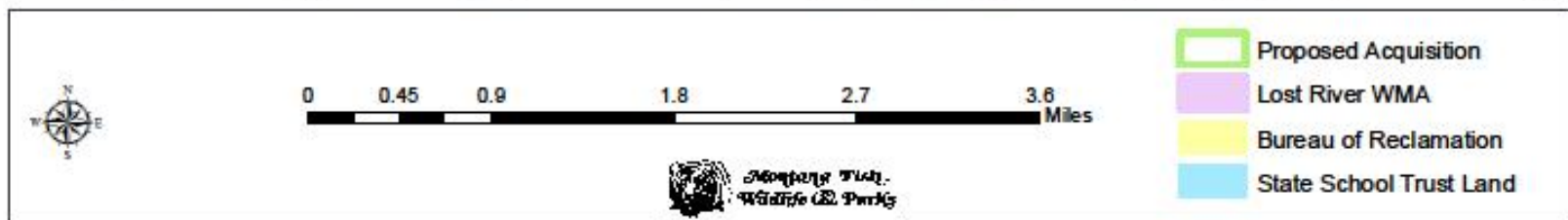
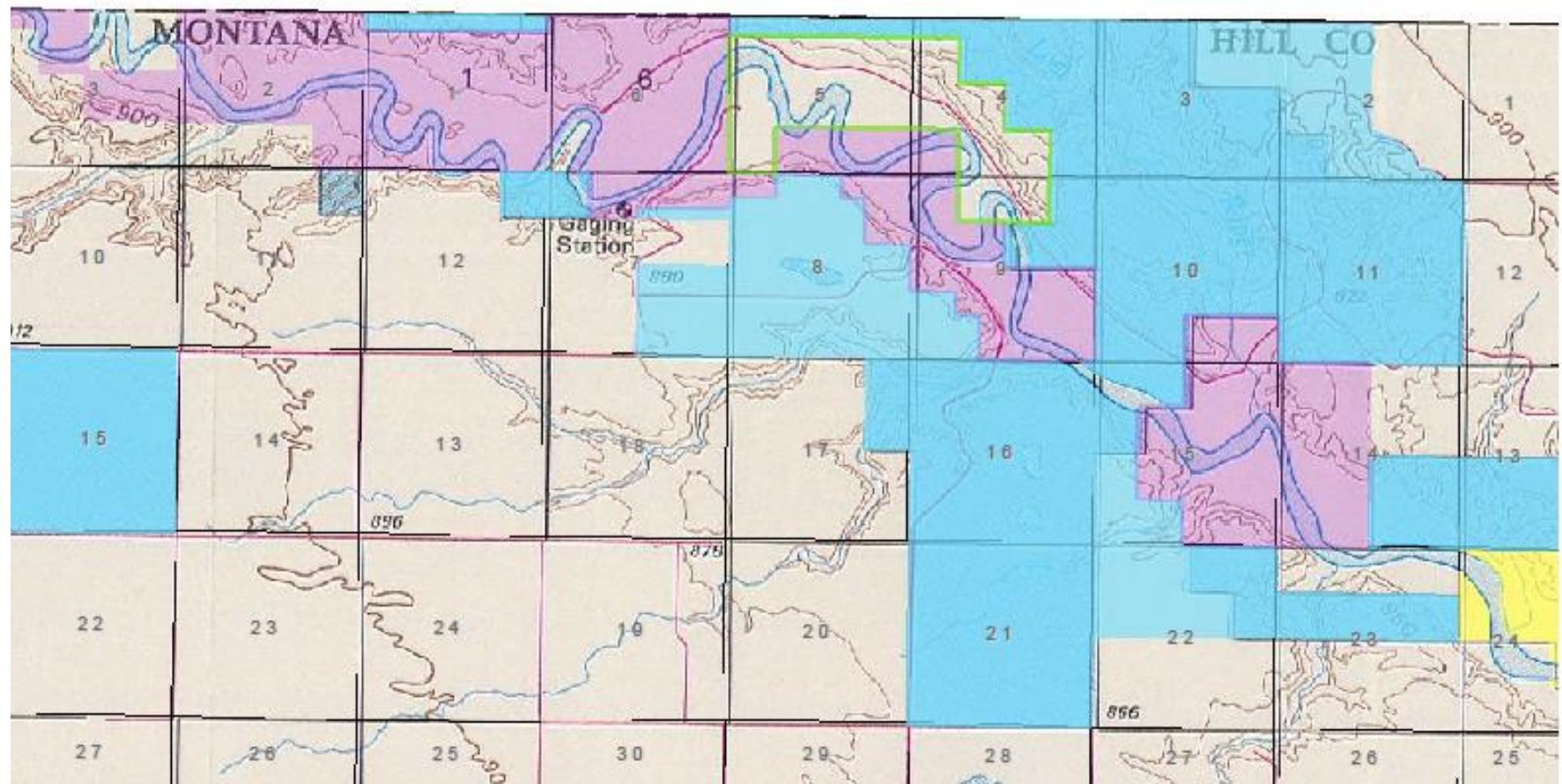
APPENDIX I

PROPERTY MAPS

Location of Proposed Lost River WMA Addition



Proposed Lost River WMA Addition



FWP Proposed Lost River WMA Addition



Montana Fish,
Wildlife & Parks

0 0.125 0.25 0.5 0.75 1 Miles

Proposed Acquisition

Lost River WMA

Bureau of Reclamation

State School Trust Land

APPENDIX II

Public Scoping Results

Montana Code Annotated (MCA) §87-1-218 requires FWP to a) conduct a public scoping process to identify issues and concerns as the initial phase of an environmental review pursuant to Title 75, chapter 1, part 2; (b) provide the public with sufficient notice of the proposed acquisition and an opportunity to provide input on reasonable alternatives, mitigation alternatives, mitigation measures, issues, and potential impacts to be addressed in the environmental review; and (c) respond to comments received during the public scoping process as part of the environmental review document.

In accordance with MCA §87-1-218, a public scoping period was held that ran from May 26th through June 25th. Public notice of the scoping period was provided on the FWP website and through a press release. In addition, written notice of the scoping period was provided to neighboring landowners, county commissioners and other interested parties.

There was only one comment received during the public scoping process that supported the acquisition. The primary reason given for their support was the proximity of the parcel to an existing WMA.

APPENDIX III

Citations

Milk River Watershed Council Canada. 2008. Milk River State of the Watershed Report 2008. Milk River Watershed Council Canada. Milk River, Alberta. 155 pp

Milk River Watershed Council Canada. 2013. Milk River Transboundary State of the Watershed Report, 2nd Edition. Milk River, Alberta. 238 pp.

Montana's State Wildlife Action Plan. 2015. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, 1420 East Sixth Avenue, Helena, MT 59620. 441 pp.

Soil Survey Staff, Natural Resources Conservation Service, United States Department of Agriculture. Web Soil Survey. Available online at <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/> Accessed July 2016.